

Industrial sprawl won't be allowed

PM says while inaugurating housing projects for govt officials

UNB, Dhaka

Stressing the importance of planned development in urban and rural areas, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said one would not be allowed to construct a building or set up an industry anywhere just because he has money.

"We don't want to let anyone do that. We are setting up 100 economic zones. The BSCIC industrial estates, established by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, will be expanded. We will carry on industrialising the country in a planned way. Everything, including schools and colleges, will be set up in a planned way," she said.

The PM was addressing a programme in the city's Eskaton Garden area marking the inauguration of new residential buildings for ministers, senior secretaries, secretaries and grade-I officials of the government.

Requesting the architects to design buildings keeping in mind the climate and weather of the country, she said the government wants to formulate a masterplan for every mega city, district, and upazila, and it is working accordingly.

She mentioned that there would be croplands, playgrounds and

recreational places apart from accommodation facilities. "We have to build each village with modern facilities."

Hasina said the government was providing all sorts of facilities to public servants for the sake of the country's development.

"We have arranged loans for them to purchase flats, we have arranged a system so that they could buy vehicles, we have arranged various facilities for them in all aspects," she said.

Talking about providing better accommodation for those staying in shanties, the PM said the government was constructing 533 flats for them in the city's Mirpur. Besides, over 16,500 flats would be built elsewhere.

"We will provide them with flats on rent basis so that they can pay their rents either daily or weekly, or monthly, but they have to pay for it."

She put emphasis on keeping and preserving wetlands and ponds.

"Ponds cannot be filled up. Once there were many ponds in Dhaka city, but those have been filled up... this cannot be done anymore."

Hasina also urged everyone to maintain austerity in using power, water and keep their respective areas clean.

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina visits a building constructed for grade one government officers on the capital's Eskaton Garden Road yesterday.

PHOTO: BSS

Kiwis praise

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awarded six runs with three balls to go in the final over.

Former umpire Simon Taufel told Fox Sports Australia that umpires had made a "clear mistake", as the batsmen had not crossed for their second run.

"They should have been awarded five runs, not six," he said, adding that England's Adil Rashid should have faced the second-last ball instead of Stokes as a result.

As Kiwi fans absorbed a second straight loss in the tournament decider, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern was concentrating on the positives.

"That was undeniably an incredible game. I think as a nation we all aged a year in that Super Over," she posted on social media.

"Congratulations to England. And to the Black Caps, I feel nothing but pride. What a team."

But her sports minister Grant Robertson questioned the tie-break method.

"What an extraordinary game. Not sure Super Over is the right end," he tweeted. "Whatever, NZ you can be so proud of this team."

Former Black Cap Scott Styris labelled governing body the ICC "a joke" over the rules but congratulated both teams on a stunning efforts.

Former New Zealand captain Stephen Fleming's one-word reaction to the result was "cruel", while even the father of England's Kiwi-born match-winner Ben Stokes felt the Kiwis were hard done by.

Gerard Stokes, a former New Zealand rugby league international who took his son to England as a boy while he pursued his career, said

honours were even.

"It's a shame there has to be a loser," he told the New Zealand Herald.

"They could have shared the trophy but that doesn't seem to be how things are done these days."

News website stuff.co.nz said New Zealand had been denied by the fine print.

"England did not win the Cricket World Cup final and the Black Caps did not lose it," an editorial said.

"But the tournament had to have a winner, somehow. And in the end, what was perhaps the most dramatic ODI ever played, was decided by a curious, contentious fine-print rule."

It was a theme echoed by Sam Flynn Scott from pop culture website The Spinoff's cricket podcast.

"Did we lose the game? It seems like it was tied and then it was tied again, then there was just some stupid rule about who wins the World Cup," he said.

"It should have been who took the most wickets (which would have given New Zealand victory)."

Former New Zealand bowler Daniel Vettori said it "feels unfortunate" the final was decided on boundaries scored but the Black Caps had to accept the rules.

He said the match also turned on several key moments, including a freak fielding deflection off Stokes' bat that raced to the boundary and a missed opportunity for Trent Boult to catch the England batsman on the boundary.

"It's going to be remembered for so many little moments and unfortunately all those little moments probably went against New Zealand," he told ESPN.

Mercury pollution poses big threat

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The department conducted a mercury study in one year since June 2018 using UN Environment's "Toolkit for Identification and Quantification of Mercury Releases" to identify the sources of emission and release as well as to determine the amount emitted from or released by the various sources.

According to the study, the total mercury release in Bangladesh is approximately 32,660 kg per year.

Of the amount, 44 percent comes from waste incineration and open waste burning, 20 percent from use and disposal of products like thermometers, paints with mercury preservatives or pigments, laboratory and medical equipment, polyurethane produced with mercury catalysts, and switches; 8 percent from informal dumping of general waste and other sources.

Most of the mercury is released into air (55 percent) and then into water (13 percent).

"The problem is that we do not have any disposal mechanism. We are littering mercury-added products here and there and then it is going to air and water," Tanvir Ahmed, civil engineering professor of Buett and also the team leader of the study, told The Daily Star yesterday.

"We have to act now otherwise a big danger is waiting for us."

Mercury, a heavy, silvery white metal, is a liquid at room temperature and can evaporate easily.

According to the World Health Organisation, there is no safe level of mercury exposure and everyone is at risk when mercury is released without safeguards.

Children, especially the newborns, and pregnant women are most vulnerable. Mercury can produce a range of adverse human health effects, including permanent damage to the nervous system.

Bangladesh is a deltaic plain crisscrossed by many rivers and remains extremely vulnerable to mercury contamination from uncontrolled dumping of mercury along with medical, industrial, electronic waste into the waters and soil, uncontrolled coal burning in brick kilns, the fish-dependent protein diet of the population, the cement and paint industries, and through the use of mercury-added products and medical applications of mercury.

Bangladesh is a signatory to the Minamata Convention on Mercury. The goal of that treaty, signed on October 10, 2013, is to protect human health and the environment from anthropogenic emissions and releases of mercury and mercury compounds. For Bangladesh to meet its future obligations under the treaty, a number of actions need to be undertaken.

Masud Iqbal Md Shameem, project director of Minamata Initial Assessment of Department of Environment (DoE), said the government has to ban some mercury products and phase out some mercury products by 2020 and as part of that the assessment was done.

"Undoubtedly the mercury pollution is a threat to environment and human health. We have just assessed the mercury pollution in Bangladesh but yet to measure the impact of pollution. It is a new danger and we all have to act now," he said.

The European Union banned mercury-containing batteries, thermometers, barometers, blood pressure monitors, and cosmetics. Mercury is also no longer allowed in most switches while energy-efficient lamps using mercury technology are only permitted on the market with reduced mercury content.

Harunor Rashid Khan, Professor at the Department of Soil, Water & Environment of University of Dhaka, said soil is getting polluted and through soil it is coming into human body, animal body and food chain.

"The way soil is being polluted, it will take revenge when the contamination will go beyond limit. And it is happening in Bangladesh as we see various heavy metals are found in food items and human body."

RIFAT MURDER

2 more accused give confessional statements

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Two more accused have given confessional statements in the Rifat Sharif murder case.

Tiktok Redoy, whose name is present in the first information report or FIR, and Ratul, a school-goer, confessed separately before a Barguna court on Sunday night.

Barguna Senior Judicial Magistrate Sirajul Islam Gazi sent Redoy to jail and Ratul to a reformatory centre in Barisal after recording their statements, said Humayun Kabir, investigation officer of the case.

Redoy and Ratul were on a five-day and a three-day remand respectively before being produced to the court, he added.

With them, the number of people, who have confessed in the case, rises to nine. A total 13 people, including seven FIR named accused, have been arrested in the case so far.

Among them, Rifat Farazi, Rabbi Akon, Arian Srabon, and Saimon are facing remands of different durations, the IO told this paper.

Rabbi, Oli, Tanvir, Chandan, Hasan, Sagor, and Najmul had confessed to their involvement in the killing earlier, he said. "All 13 suspects appeared before the court around 10:00am [yesterday]. The next hearing has been set for July 31."

The main accused of the case, Noyon Bond, was killed in a reported gunfight with police on July 2.

Nayan and his close accomplice Rifat Farazi allegedly attacked 25-year-old Rifat Sharif, an internet service provider, with sharp weapons in front of Barguna Government College on June 26. His wife Aysha Siddika Minni desperately tried in vain to save him.

A video footage of the killing went viral on the social media and sparked outrage among many.

Rifat died at the Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital in Barisal. His father Abdul Halim Dulal Sharif filed a case with the Barguna Police Station against 12 people the same day.

Man stabbed

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started to stab Faruk, who tried to save his life running through the courtroom.

Hasan kept chasing him.

At one point, Faruk hid under a table, but he was already stabbed in the throat, neck and back, said police and court sources, adding that the incident spread panic at the courtroom.

Critically injured Faruk was rushed to the Cumilla Medical College Hospital where he was declared dead. Hasan was arrested along with the knife.

The body was sent to Cumilla Medical College morgue for autopsy.

Meanwhile, a three-member committee was formed to investigate how an accused could bring a knife with him to the courtroom, said Syed Nurul Islam, superintendent of police in the district.

No new electricity, gas connections

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distribution line expansion, Nasrul told journalists that acquisition of required land was a problem.

"The government is preparing a land acquisition policy. After that we will be able to expand the distribution line rapidly," he said.

He said the government would disconnect power and gas lines to government and autonomous entities if they did not pay their outstanding bills. They owe the government between Tk 8,000 crore and Tk 9,000 crore, he added.

TAX COMMITTEES

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) termed "positive" the DCs' proposal for forming revenue collection committees, led by UNOs and DCs, to increase the revenue collection at local level, said Mashur Rahman, economic affairs adviser to the prime minister.

"But the NBR said it needs more details on the proposal and that it would decide only after getting details," he said after a session with the DCs.

The NBR is recruiting more tax officials at district and upazila levels to increase revenue collection. After that, it would think about forming such committees, he said.

Mashur said there was no discussion in the session on the DCs request for Tk 1 crore allocation for each district to observe "special days" and establishing "Janaprashasan Bank" for administration cadres.

He said the government would consider the proposals when it gets

them through proper channels.

EDUCATION TV

Following a session with the DCs, Education Minister Dipu Moni told journalists that the government was considering launching "Education Television" channel.

She said lessons by renowned teachers would be aired there to improve education quality.

"We have had a discussion on setting up Education Television. We will look into what we can do regarding the matter."

"It will be better to have Education TV so that classes of renowned teachers could be telecast. Students and teachers of all areas would be benefited. With this, all students would have equal knowledge on a topic," she said when asked if the government would send good teachers from urban areas to rural schools as guest teachers.

Asked about the DCs request for specialised university for civil servant, she said, "We will consider the matter if we get the proposal."

The minister asked the DCs to take steps to stop coaching centre business, and illegal guidebooks, and to ensure quality school infrastructure.

"We also asked the DCs to keep an eye on sexual harassment of students. Carry out awareness programmes at schools and elsewhere against this," she added.

NEWS PORTAL

Information Minister Mohammad Hasan Mahmud after a session said

the government would register "true" online news portals after scrutinising their applications.

After a session with the DCs, he said over 8,000 news portals have sought registration.

A DC requested specific guidelines for journalists of online news portals.

The minister said misuse of Digital Security Act was discussed in the session.

DCs MEET PRESIDENT

President M Abdul Hamid asked DCs to serve as real "public servants" and give priority to greater interests of the country.

"In your respective workplaces, keep the difference between responsibilities and powers... Don't misuse power. Take government services to the people's doorsteps," he said at the Durbar Hall of Bangabhaban yesterday evening.

He said the DCs must provide effective and proper leadership to fulfill the people's fundamental rights, and ensure social safety and women empowerment.

He ordered them to take steps to stop the wrongdoings of vested quarters as the paddy farmers were being deprived of fair prices.

Referring to different development projects in housing, education, expansion of industry-based agriculture, medicare services, electricity, gas, water and sewerage system, the president asked the DCs to turn upazila towns into modern townships.

Coastal districts of the country will be affected for the climate change," she said.

The premier mentioned that the government has set up a climate change resilience trust fund with Tk 1000 crore to combat climate change.

"We will erect a green belt in the coastal areas to fight climate change," she said.

Hasina congratulated the outgoing

10 killed as train hits microbus



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60 injured as a train rammed into a bus carrying a bridal party at an unmanned level crossing at Barobazar of Kaliganj in Jhenidah. The bride and groom escaped unhurt.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Railway (BR) formed a four-member committee, led by Pakshi Divisional Transportation Officer (DTO) Md Abdulla Al Mamum, to investigate the matter. They will submit their report within three working days.

Talking to The Daily Star, the DTO admitted there was no gateman at the crossing but said the driver of the microbus was to blame as there were cautionary signboards on both sides of the crossing.

Md Sawkat Osman, chairman of Solop union parishad, said the railway authorities were reluctant to set a gateman at the level crossing.

"Solop level crossing is located in a road used by vehicles travelling to and from Kamarkhand to Ullapara upazila. Although many vehicles use this road, there is no gateman at the crossing."

"We have several times demanded that the railway authorities engage a gateman at the crossing but they are reluctant to do so," the chairman said.

Division Railway Manager (Pakshi) Mizarul Rahman told The Daily Star last night that the "unmanned" level crossing was constructed without taking their consent.

There around a thousand unmanned illegal level crossings across country, mostly constructed by different government bodies, railway sources said.

The latest incident comes at a time when BR is under huge criticism for poor maintenance of its rail tracks and bridges, which stemmed from two major accidents in less than a month.

At least four people were killed and more than 100 injured as a passenger train-- Upaban Express-- derailed on a bridge in Moulvibazar on June 23.

On July 10, an oil-carrying train derailed in Rajshahi's Charghat upazila, snapping Rajshahi's rail communication with the rest of the country for more than day.

Myanmar must take back all Rohingyas

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of Rohingyas was not conducive at present.

The ambassador also said the role France is playing in the climate change issue will continue.

While talking about the issue, Hasina said the Paris Agreement should be implemented.

Hasina said Bangladesh was contributing less to the case of carbon emission, but the country was the worst sufferers in the event of climate

change.

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Hasina congratulated the outgoing

ambassador for completing her successful tenure in Bangladesh and appreciated her commendable efforts and hard work to further strengthen and broaden bilateral relations between the two countries.

The ambassador mentioned that the people and officials are very warm and friendly.

PM's Principal Secretary Md Nojibur Rahman was present on the occasion.